

BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Session
June 2, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:03 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and President Moore. Also present were, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager, and Isobel Storch, Esquire from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C. Borough Solicitor. Absent were: Ms. Ervin, Mr. Cohn, and Mayor John Thompson. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Jones – 579 Princeton Blvd. – Voiced his concern regarding an abandoned house at 601 Princeton Blvd. The property is overgrown and there are raccoons and feral cats. Ms. Marcinko will inform the Code Enforcement Department and assign a Code Enforcement Officer to inspect the property and issue Notices of Violation as appropriate. Mr. Jones questioned the possibility of establishing a stop intersection at Florida & Princeton. Ms. Marcinko commented that there is a process by which stop intersections are established and that certain conditions must exist in order to warrant this installation. Stop intersections cannot be established to control speed.

Shirley Elston – 1726 Wright St. – Commented that information contained in the Wilkinsburg Sun regarding upcoming activities is often outdated by the time the publication is released. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson responded that information on many of the events is not provided to the Sun staff in a timely fashion. John Irwin commented that he is aware of the shortcomings and would be happy to talk with her after the meeting. Ms. Elston commented on the condition of the property at 1800 Wright St. She is aware of the fact that the property owner has been cited but little has been done to correct the issues. She questioned whether the Borough could clean up the property and bill the property owner.

Ernest Jones – 563 Princeton Blvd. – Expressed his thanks to Ms. Macklin for the assistance she has provided in attempting to resolve the issue relating to the handicapped parking space on Princeton Blvd. His daughter's car was towed from said space and he is seeking reimbursement from the Borough for the \$135.00 towing fee. Ms. Marcinko commented that Council had tabled the action to reimburse this cost pending information from the police officer and that Council does not have the authority to expunge a ticket.

Gail Mitchell-Hall – Wilkinsburg Weed & Seed Coordinator – Ms. Mitchell-Hall updated Council on the proposed collaboration with the County Department of Human Services to host a town meeting. The County wants to assist the Weed and Seed Initiative with identifying needs in the community and supporting Weed & Seed by encouraging other organizations to participate on the Weed & Seed subcommittees. The Initiative is also collaborating with Just Harvest. Just Harvest will be presenting a program, at the Homewood Library, with the topic being the processing of food and the deleterious effects of this processing. There has also been discussion of a similar presentation at the Wilkinsburg Public Library. The Wilkinsburg School District will be working with the Allegheny Children's Initiative to secure a grant in the amount of \$500,000. Ms. Mitchell Hall reported that the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency has invited her to serve on its regional subcommittee. Wilkinsburg has been identified as making the second most referrals of juveniles to the juvenile justice system. Penn Hills was identified as being first. Ms. Mitchell Hall commented on an email which was circulated relating to the placement of a dumpster for the Keys AmeriCorps clean up on private property for the benefit of individual residents. Ms. Mitchell Hall commented that this was the first formal complaint received regarding the group's work. She will meet with Keys AmeriCorps to retain them to clean up areas within the Borough and apply parody in determining locations and place volunteers in each ward. Ms. Evans praised Keys AmeriCorps volunteers' work within the Borough.

Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Ave. – Ms. Luxemburg suggested that, in going forward, there should be a listing of work to be done, using lot and block numbers to identify locations, and it should be available for review. She commented that she did not believe it to be "fair" when she paid to demolish garages she owns and a private property benefitted from a container provided and paid for by Borough. She questioned whether criterion was applied for receiving service and that people should sign up and be on a list. She commented that the focus should be on cleaning up public areas first and private property owners will follow.

Mr. Lewis commented that it would be helpful if all were informed of the process.

Eunice Nelson – 535 Shelbourne St. – Ms. Nelson commented that she is a new resident and volunteer. She commented that the the volunteers helped move items that were in peoples' back yard that they would not have been able to move themselves had it not been for the AmeriCorps volunteers. She commented on the deteriorated condition of the property at 533 Shelbourne.

REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Thompson was not able to attend the meeting due to work commitments.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

President Moore provided the Adult Library Report:

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- The F.E.L.L.O.W. Annual Book Sale and flea market begins on June 4 and continues through June 12, 2010. The Library received a very large donation from the Barnes and Noble store which recently closed in North Huntingdon.
- The air conditioning is being repaired in the library.
- Sign-ups for the summer reading program are being taken.

President Moore expressed her appreciation for the work of the Keys AmeriCorps volunteers.

President Moore expressed concern regarding the appearance of the community, especially overgrowth at intersections. She further cited the number of potholes and the poor condition of street signs. She commented that greater code enforcement is needed in the neighborhoods and that department leaders need to do a better job. Additionally she cited that there are a number of abandoned buildings which need to be secured in the 700, 800, and 900 blocks of Hill Ave.

President Moore congratulated all upcoming graduates.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Planning Committee- Ms. Macklin reported:

- The Committee met on May 26, 2010.
- Ms. Macklin expressed her concerns regarding the lack of maintenance of current assets and the need for better preventive maintenance scheduling.
- Ms. Macklin commented that the Borough is responsible for curb maintenance and she has spoken with the Borough Manager regarding a program to incent or encourage sidewalk replacement when curbs are replaced.
- Ms. Macklin commented that she and Ms. Trice had noted dumping in Hunter Park.
- Ms. Macklin inquired as to the status of emergency demolition monies for the structures at Tioga and Wood. Ms. Marcinko advised that no word had yet been received from the County.
- Ms. Macklin commented that the Linear Park is in poor condition and needs to be cleaned up.
- Ms. Macklin questioned the status of hiring of summer laborers. Ms. Marcinko advised that the last round of interviews were held last week. Ms. Hall commented that there will be on worker from last year returning and the background checks are in process.

Ms. Evans commented on Borough-owned properties and lack of maintenance for the past ten (10) years. She commented on the need for scheduled maintenance by Borough crews and, if that is not possible, an outside contractor should be hired. Ms. Macklin questioned whether a work order system exists in the Freedom System. Ms. Marcinko will check into this and inquire of other communities. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented that if the Borough contracts out for scheduled maintenance services, work

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would have to be monitored to ensure it was being done. She further commented that Waste Management has not been picking up garbage in the parks in accordance with their contract with the Borough.

Finance Committee –

Mr. Cohn was absent due to work commitments.

Personnel Committee –Ms. Trice reported:

- The Committee met on May 12, 2010.
- Ms. Renee Piechocki from the Office of Public Art attended the meeting and presented the slate of candidates for the Community Art & Civic Design Commission to the Committee. Nine applicants were recommended by the Committee for Council's approval on May 19.
- There are two positions on the CACDC Board; one for an Urban Planner and the other opening is for a representative from the Wilkinsburg Historical Society.
- The Committee is continuing to discuss progressive discipline procedures with Ms. Marcinko preparing a draft for review at the next meeting.
- The next meeting will be held on June 9, 2010 at 6:00 PM. These meetings are not open to the public.

TCVCOG – Ms. Trice reported:

- There have been a total of sixty-seven (67) pre-applications submitted for the upcoming CDBG Year, totaling over \$7,000,000. Full applications must be received in the COG office no later than July 23, 2010.
- Bids were opened for the Safe Neighborhood Demolition Project.
- One CD 36 project is pending for the Singer Place Storm Sewer replacement.
- The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2010.

Public Safety Committee –Mr. Lefebvre reported:

- The Committee met on May 21, 2010.
- The paving contract for 2010 has been completed.
- Both pump stations have been completely repaired.
- The Code Enforcement Department received training from a Dormont municipal employee on the Land Management System on May 27, 2010.
- Fire Chief McAfee has applied for FEMA Grants for new fire apparatus.
- Chief McAfee and Mr. Focareta met with FEMA and PEMA officials regarding reimbursement from the February snow storm.
- The Police Department received reimbursement of approximately \$8,000 for the Borough's participation in the G20 Summit security activities.
- The Youth Police Academy will begin June 28, 2010 and continue through July 9, 2010.
- The next meeting will be held on June 16, 2010 in Council Chambers at 5:30 PM.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Marcinko:

- Inquired as to Council's intention on the most recent collective bargaining agreement proposal from S.E.I.U. It was the consensus of Council that there be no change to its most recent counter proposal.

OLD BUSINESS

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Ms. Trice, to reimburse Ms. Jones for the towing costs of \$135.00. Ms. Macklin commented that she had received a call last week from a different police officer attempting to resolve the issue. Ms. Macklin requested that a letter be sent to all residents with handicapped parking spaces advising that the space is available to anyone possessing a handicapped placard or license plate. Ms. Storch commented that the payment would go to the towing company. She recommended that a letter be sent to the property owner advising that the law allows any individual with a valid handicap placard and/or a handicap license plate to park there.

Mr. Lewis commented that additional information had come forward and affected his position in providing reimbursement to Mr. Jones.

Yes: Ms. Macklin, Ms. Trice

No: Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans (Ms. Evans commented that the action is for a magistrate appeal not for Council members to decide), President Moore

Motion failed 2:5

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Macklin questioned the status of the sale of the church to the library for its Eastridge Branch and expressed concern from a financial standpoint with increased maintenance costs resulting from the increased space.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced that Arts in the Parks begins on Thursday, June 3, 2010 from 6:30 PM to 8:15 PM. There has been an invitation from Manchester Craftsman's Guild to attend an exhibit on June 3, 2010 from 5:30-8:30 PM. Mr. Lewis questioned the weather contingency plan. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson will distribute flyers with additional information. In inclement weather, the event will be held at South Avenue United Methodist Church.

Ms. Moore congratulated Ms. Macklin on the birth of her granddaughter.

Ms. Evans announced that the WDCD position for a Beautification Coordinator for the Wilkinsburg Business District is open. Ms. Evans advised that she has received inquiries regarding the flashing lights at the intersection of South Ave. and Swissvale Ave. She

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announced that the new street signs for Penn Ave were received and installed but they do not reflect the final design which was submitted to PA DOT by the Borough. Ms. Evans suggested sending letters of support to state representatives, senators, County officials etc. in support of the emergency demolition of the structures at Wood and Tioga.

Mr. Lefebvre announced that Saturday June 5, 2010 is "Love Your Watershed Day" with an event at South Trenton and South from 12:00-5:00 PM.

Ms. Marcinko requested Council's action on a request for street closure submitted by Youth Places for Mulberry Street between South and Franklin on Monday June 21, 2010 from 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM. The request has been reviewed and approved by Chief Coleman and Chief McAfee.

Moved: Mr. Lewis

Second: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Yes: Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Ms. Evans, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President